

SOCIAL CHANGE IN NORTH AUSTRALIA

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been used only once, with no sense of real loss to the owner. It does not¹⁷⁷ burden the native with "excess baggage." It is easier to make a new one⁵⁰¹ than to keep an old one.

The use of the pandanus sail has become general in the north. It is easily constructed and only a few hours are needed for its manufacture. It is a labor-saving device, and any such invention is deeply appreciated by the leisure-loving blacks. It, too, fits into the general scheme; no new technique was needed for its manufacture. The simple twining method^[285] used in the construction of the native basket or mat, with only slight modification, made an excellent pandanus leaf sail, the only difference being in the size of the strands used.

The most difficult element in the learning process that would enable a man to sail a boat rather than paddle it was the actual sailing itself. As has been said, the manufacture of a mast and sail is simple; but to learn to sail a canoe with a large pandanus sail, to adjust it to the vagaries of winds and tides, and, in all, to learn the job of a sailor man, undoubtedly took a long time. From what the writer has seen of the native's lack of interest in any activity that was not pleasurable, it seems obvious to him that if the native had not had a keen interest in the sea and a strong wanderlust, both of which the dugout canoe and its mast and sail definitely satisfied, Murngin civilization would never have adopted this whole complex.

The Malay pipe is a small, straight stick with its center bored out; at about four inches from the distal end a hole is made in the side of the pipe¹⁷⁷ which connects with the central chamber; this latter hole is lined with²⁷⁶ a small piece of tin and forms the bowl of the pipe. Bamboo or cane is generally used, or a small tree whose central core has been eaten out by termites. The Malays introduced both the use and the manufacture of the tobacco pipe during the period in which they traded with the aborigines. Although the aborigines know that they acquired the pipe from the Malays, they believe they practiced smoking before this time, and point to the fact that there are several native tobaccos.¹¹ Whether this is true or not it is impossible to say at the present time, but nearly all the evidence seems to point to the introduction of smoking into Australia from a Malay source. However, if the latter is true, the natives quickly learned how to use native substitutes after they could no longer obtain Malay tobacco.

The substitution of the iron tomahawk (brought in as an article of trade by the Malays) for the stone axe can be understood, since the iron¹⁷⁷ implement is a far more capable instrument, and—a more important reason—⁴¹² the tomahawk was easily acquired and it was not necessary to learn

¹¹ The Murngin insist that they had a native tobacco before the Macassar introduced the variety they use at the present time. The leaves were macerated and wrapped in paper bark and smoked as a cigarette, or put in a cane which had a hole in one end much like the Queensland type of pipe.

301 *Fish-vertebrae Necklace.*—The vertebrae of the larger fish, including
237 sharks, are cleaned, bored, covered with red ochre, and strung on a strand of fiber string which is tied tightly around the neck. These necklaces are worn by all members of the tribe on any occasion.

291 *Human-hair Belts.*—The Murngin wear a belt or band made of human hair which fits tightly across the upper portion of the buttocks and around the sides as far as the hip bones, where strings are attached and tied in front of the pubic hair. There are two types, a bundle or cylindrical one, and a flat or sewn variety. One continuous human hair string about fifty to sixty feet long is looped back and forth and the end of the bunch of loops wrapped for one-half inch with fiber string or human hair. The belt has a norm of about twenty-two inches, which varies from twelve to twenty-four inches. It has about fifty-five strands in it, but varies from twenty-four to sixty-five. Frequently the opossum pubic covering is attached to this belt, although usually it is worn by itself. A single small loop may be left at each end to which the fiber string for tying is attached.

The flat type of belt is made with one continuous string looped about thirty times. Vegetable fiber or human hair string is tied about each end of the bundle, which is flattened by stitching with bands of fiber string at about three-inch intervals. This allows the belt to fit snugly against the buttocks of the wearer and across the small of the back.

292 Ceremonial human hair belts are made by wrapping red parrot feathers over each of the strands in the belt to form a solid layer of red. The wrapping material is pandanus leaf. These belts are always made from the hair [765] of dead persons, which limits the size of the belt. The strands varied, in the few examined, from six to twelve in number. This belt is only worn on [84] ceremonial occasions and no woman may see it, even though it is made from the hair of either men or women.

291 *Pubic Aprons.*—The pubic apron, usually of opossum fur string, is less
301 an item of clothing than an article of adornment. Although it is an expression of the people's modesty, it is classed with necklaces and bracelets rather than as a covering for the genitalia. It is composed of a basal strand and a fringe. The basal strand is usually of fiber string, but occasionally human hair is used. The fringe is made of one continuous strand of opossum fur looped about the basal cord. Each loop is twisted into a two-ply tassel, which is about ten inches long for men and five to six inches for women. The ends of the basal strand are tied in a large knot to keep the loops from slipping off. The apron is attached to a belt.

• 295 *Baskets.*—Since all baskets are carrying baskets equipped with carrying-strings, they also have been placed in the category of things worn.

All basketry in this district is made by the twining technique. The inner layer of the pandanus leaf and water-lily fiber are the two materials used. The latter is found only in the open-work type of basket, while the former is generally used for the tightly woven mesh, and occasionally also for the

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open type. A tree root is sometimes used for the web of the open-work basket. 285

A.—The closely woven type of basket has three norms in size: the large, the medium, and the small. The large type is eighteen inches in length with a variation of eleven and one-half to twenty inches, and a diameter at the rim of six to eight inches. There is a slight diminution of diameter in the basket from the rim to the bottom until, within three inches of the bottom, the circumference rapidly converges to a point. This basket is usually used by the women, but occasionally men carry one. Ordinarily it is undecorated. The women use it to gather food and carry their possessions, such as fire sticks, string, et cetera. 285 415

The medium-sized variety has a length-norm of eleven inches and a diameter of three inches. It varies in length from nine and one-half to fifteen inches, and the diameter sometimes reaches four and one-quarter inches. It is used almost entirely by men. They carry their personal belongings in it. Such things as stone spear heads wrapped in paper bark, red ocher, white clay, human hair and vegetable fiber string, and ceremonial objects carefully wrapped to protect them from the profane eyes of women are found in these baskets.

The small type of basket is very closely woven so that it can carry honey. It is owned by the men. It is seven inches long and has a diameter of two and one-half inches. There is little variation in this type.

All the above types are stitched about the rim with fiber string to keep the mesh from working apart, and to strengthen the basket and prevent it from becoming too flexible.

Baskets usually are painted red, black, yellow, and white for two-thirds of their circumference. The remaining third is left unpainted or undecorated, for it is the portion that fits against the wearer's body. The string handle is attached at the top of the basket at the points where the painting starts. It is composed of two to six strings sixteen inches long. Men wear their baskets under one arm with the string slung over the same shoulder. Women always wear theirs with the string handle across the forehead, the basket hanging against the back of the head and neck. The women's mode of carrying a basket is so characteristic that it is used by a man dancing a woman's part in a sacred ceremony. [531] [482]

Several types of designs are painted on the surface of the baskets (with a preliminary coating of red ocher): 285 415

- (1) The surface of the basket is covered with hatched-in squares.
- (2) A series of yellow, white and red spirals run from the rim to the bottom of the basket. 531
- (3) The length of the basket is divided into three or four sections and painted in light and dark colors.

In addition to painting, an overstitching of pandanus fiber sometimes runs laterally about the basket.

A BLACK CIVILIZATION

285 Red parrot feathers are woven or stuck into the men's baskets. Usually
415 they form a small band around the top of the basket, sometimes a solid
531 mass over the upper half of it, and again they outline the ordinary square
pattern that covers the entire surface. Human hair is sometimes stitched on
for an outline instead of feathers. It is also used as a fringe over the entire
basket or on a line about two or three inches from the top. Opossum fur
is also used as a fringe and to outline the diamond pattern.—Any of the
described baskets may have from two to eight pendants of parrot feathers
hanging from the rim of the basket to several inches beyond its bottom.

285 B.—The large type of open-work basket has the greatest size of any
415 found in this area. It is thirty-two inches by eighteen inches in size and
[482] has a mesh of three-eighths of an inch. It is carried by a woman by means
of a fiber-string forehead band and is usually used for gathering cycad palm
nuts. The smaller-sized open-work basket has a mesh of one-quarter inch.
It normally is seventeen inches deep, but varies from fourteen to eighteen
inches. It has a diameter variation of from six to eight inches. All open-mesh
baskets are stitched at the top. None is ever decorated, and all of them are
used by women to gather food and to carry their personal belongings.

301 *Armlets, Wristlets, and Anklets.*—The native armlets are usually made
by the plaiting technique. The plait consists of from two to five strands,
two being the normal number. The armlet is normally from one-half to
three-quarters of an inch in width, but sometimes reaches a width of two
inches. The diameter corresponds to the size of the wearer's arm. Wristlets,
but not armlets, are made on the arm of the wearer by another person and
worn until they fall off.

[531] Spear grass is the usual material. The grass is split into two or three
pieces and soaked in water for one or two days before it is ready for use.
A small stick or bone is used for tucking in the free strands to give the
ornament a smooth appearance and keep the edges from breaking to pieces.
Sometimes fiber string is wrapped about the armlets, and many are painted
with angular designs.

Women wear a series of armlets half up the upper arm, but men only
put on a few.

[537] Another variety of armlet is made from the end of a piece of cane. About
a quarter-inch width of the reed is wrapped with fiber string which has
feathers woven into it, or feathers are bound to the armlet with a cord.
Frequently from two to four parrot-feather string pendants, tipped with
white cockatoo feathers, are hung from the armlet; these usually have a
core of human hair on to which the feathers are wrapped with fiber string.
The same technique is used for feathered string pendants as for other
objects decorated with feathered string.

Anklets are sometimes made in the same way as armlets; but whereas
the latter are worn by men, women, and children most of the time, the
anklet is seldom worn.

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Ainmaras.—These native artifacts serve as a woman's article of apparel, 285
a mat to sit on, a sunshade, and a mosquito and fly net. All of the uses
except the first, which is primary, are employed by both men and women.

The ainmara is made of the inner bark of the pandanus with the twining
technique. When open it looks like the bottom of a large basket, and when
folded like a quarter section of a circle; it is ordinarily twenty inches long
and thirty-six inches at its greatest width. The folded ainmaras are a con-
stant equipment of women.

Sometimes the warp is left as a six-inch fringe around the edge of the
ainmara.

The half-circle variety of the ainmara (twenty-six and one-half inches
by thirty inches) cannot be used for a sunshade or mosquito and fly net.

Both are sometimes decorated with overstitched lines of pandanus fiber [531]
or human hair string.

Ainmaras are made by both men and women, but usually by women. [462]
The woman starts at the center and gradually widens it as she continues
her twining. The enlarging surface is kept smooth and even by placing
the mat on the sand and rubbing it with a smooth flat stone.

A small fiber string loop is put into the point of the folded ainmara [482]
and a woman carries it on her arm at the elbow or by holding it in her
hand. Most of the women wear no pubic coverings and when a strange [291]
man approaches the camp they cover their pudenda with the ainmara. [834]
Sometimes a woman's modesty affects her in such a way that she hides
her face rather than her pubic parts.

During the midday siesta men and sometimes women open the ainmara
and double the body up beneath it to keep the flies off and protect them-
selves from the direct rays of the sun. During the sand-fly and mosquito
months the ainmaras are used to keep off these insects.

3. WEAPONS

Spear-thrower (Mang-el)

The type of spear-thrower used by the Murngin and natives of north- 411
eastern Arnhem Land has a general distribution in Australia from the
Kimberleys of West Australia to the southern shores of the Gulf of Car- 171
pentaria. The particular variety of this weapon found among the Murngin
reaches the Daly River in the west and south, the Katherine River, also
in the south, and east to the Gulf of Carpentaria. The Groote Eylandt
people possess a modification of the mangel type of spear-thrower. The
Kimberley variety, although belonging to the same general type as the
Murngin, is larger and is made of a different kind of material from that
found among the Arnhem Land natives.

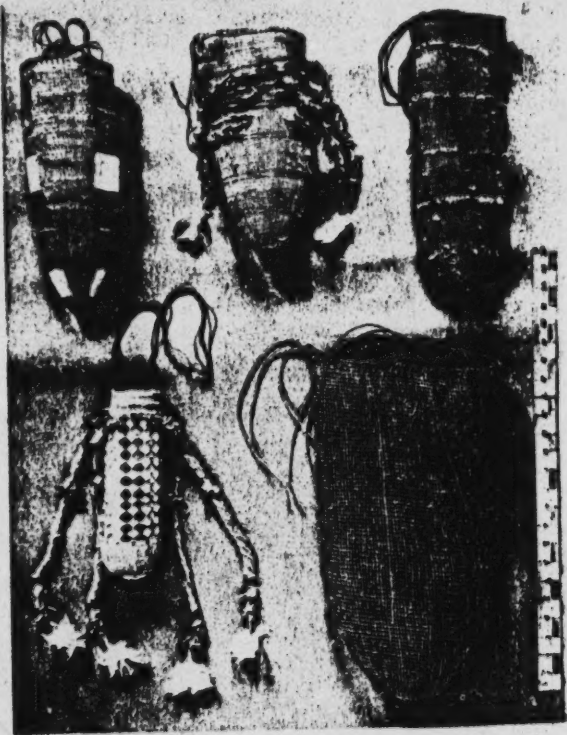
The length of the mangel ranges from thirty-four to thirty-nine inches, 411
with a norm of three feet. It is made of a hard wood of medium weight

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
OI 17 Murgin OI 17



IIIb. TOTEMIC EMBLEMS USED IN NARRA CEREMONY.

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IIIa. FOUR MEN'S BASKETS;
WOMAN'S CARRYING-BASKET (lower left).

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[P.558C]

CARVED AND PAINTED FIGURES

The Mosquito Sacred Object

Plate 192D is a sacred object of the mosquito totem of Milingimbi. It belongs to the *dua narra* ceremonies. Collected by F. M. Setzler. 532*
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3. CARVED AND PAINTED HUMAN HEADS

The Two Brothers, Banaramin and Wururunga

The two brothers, Banaramin⁷⁸ and Wururunga, set out to kill their enemy, Djunmundia, who had previously murdered their father.⁷⁹

Plate 199D, E, A, H illustrates the carved heads of the two brothers, Banaramin and Wururunga. 628
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The designs on the face of Banaramin, Pl. 199D, E, and the white line down the nose, which represents the deadly tiger-snake, *dunbania*, are always painted on the face of the aborigines when they are setting out on an avenging expedition. They are known as the 'death-marks'.⁸⁰ The darker cross-hatched panels on the side of the head, Pl. 199D, indicate the base of the thunder-cloud, and the lighter coloured ones, their white tops. [302]

The white dots on the face of Wururunga, Pl. 199H, are hail-stones, *milarik*, and the hole at the base of the nose, an attempt to represent a skull, for Wururunga has long since been dead.

On the side of the head of Wururunga, Pl. 199A, the darker cross-hatched panel represents falling rain, and the lighter coloured ones a hail-storm. The white dots on the side of the head also indicate hail-stones. When these hail-stones fall to the ground in *dua* territory they are sometimes transformed into white stones, *milarik*.⁸¹ The dots on the neck are falling rain, and the white cap, the tops of cumulus clouds.

The Spirit Man, Duwuliana

This *dua* *Mokoi*, Duwuliana, lives in a forest at Arnhem Bay. As his only food is the honey of the wild bees, he carries only a honey basket.⁸² 776
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At the beginning of the dry season the basket is clean, having been well washed by the heavy storms of the wet season. As the dry season advances the basket becomes progressively darker in colour, due to the accumulated honey and dirt, for Duwuliana is a careless fellow who never washes his honey basket, knowing that the next wet season will save him the trouble. At the beginning of the dry season the honey in the hives in the trees is a golden-yellow in colour, but it gradually darkens and becomes less pleasant to eat as the season advances. The aborigines blame Duwuliana for this change, claiming that if he were more cleanly and washed his basket regularly they would always have clear golden honey.

78. In the myth of the bark painting, Pl. 98A, Banaramin is called *Tjuna-tjuna*.

79. See myth of *Tjuna-tjuna* and Wururunga, p. 303.

80. See myth, p. 303.

81. See the white stones, *milarik*, at the totem place of the thunder-man at Jallusa, Pl. 91D.

82. A tightly woven basket which will hold honey. (265)
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 THE ABORIGINES OF EAST ARNHAM LAND

either for good or ill. Thus there are found few natural leaders ¹⁵⁷ among these people, a man's individuality being submerged in the ¹⁸² life of his horde or tribe. This same fact, coupled with the ^[614] extreme isolation in which this race has for centuries lived, has also served to stultify progress.

Only by a man of exceptionally forceful character could ¹⁷⁸ reforms be instituted, and life has consequently gone on practically unchanged for countless generations.

Toward those whose friendship has been proved these ⁵⁷⁷ aborigines show a splendid spirit of loyalty. Those who treat them in a fair and friendly fashion will receive fair dealing and devoted friendship in return.

Arts and Crafts

The weapons and utensils used throughout this area ⁴¹¹ correspond to the usual aboriginal type, but include a number of local variations. Little use is made of any weapon other than the spear, though clubs of several types are used to a limited extent, as also are boomerangs.

There are many varieties of wooden spears, barbed and unbarbed, some of which have the head and the haft fashioned out of a single piece of hardwood in a very remarkable way. Flaked ^[438] stone spear-heads are much used, particularly for fighting, and these heads are traded over wide distances.

The use of iron, particularly for spear-heads and cutting ¹⁷⁷ implements, has been known for many decades, this material ⁴¹¹ being obtained in limited quantities from the old traders from ⁴³⁹ Macassar. Only boomerangs of a heavy type are used, and these are by no means common. The light, return boomerang is unknown, as is also the shield.

Many types of "dilly-bag" are made, some of which are of ⁴¹⁵ such fine texture as to retain water. Others are highly decorated ^[285] with feathers or fur woven in during manufacture. The material used in most cases is the split leaf of the pandanus palm. Other ^[286] bags are made of string knotted very neatly and evenly in an open mesh. Fish nets are also constructed in the same way.

Excellent string is manufactured from bark fibre, grass, fur, ²⁸³ and human hair, and is used for a wide variety of purposes. Much of it designed for ceremonial purposes is decorated with feathers interwoven during spinning. Strong rope is made of bark fibre or grass, and used in the harpooning of turtle, dugong, or porpoise, and for the mooring of canoes.

KUNAPIPI

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as far as the women in the main camp are officially concerned, are "swallowed by the Snake". Theoretically, they are not supposed to return to the society of women until they are re-born at the end of the Kunapiipi. Old men "chase the Snake back" into the sacred ground, where it swallows the initiates; thus they avert the disaster of the whole main camp's being swallowed by Julunggul. This part of the ritual reveals a propitiatory aspect; the initiates "are given" to the Julunggul in order to save the rest of the camp. 796 881

Later that night the men return, having left the boys in the protection of their guardians; they tell the women (particularly the initiates' mothers, mothers' sisters and mothers' mothers), "All the young boys have gone to-day; Julunggul has swallowed them up". And the women wail, singing the clan songs of the initiates, as if they were dead. In practice, the women do wail, as they do in the *djungga-won* when the boys are taken out to the sacred ground by the men; but in theory it is said that "the women don't cry, for they might become sick", since Julunggul might be antagonized, thinking the women objected to her methods. "She might return and swallow them too". [52] [753]

On the two following nights, the same events take place: Julunggul comes towards the camp, her voice is heard, and more young initiates are taken out. This continue until all the initiates are collected on the sacred ground; and a sequence of totemic dancing takes place, "teaching" the young boys. Some of this dancing takes place before dawn; intermittent singing and acting continue all night, while the women return the calls of the men from the main camp, or cry out when they hear the hum of the bullroarer. The cry of the women is the cry of the Wauwalak when they saw Julunggul; and when they dance, their dancing is similar to that of the Wauwalak, trying to stop the progress of the Snake. The *jiritja* snake men dance to represent the snakes who watched Julunggul swallowing the Wauwalak. The totemic animals, birds and vegetables that are sung and danced at morning and evening rituals are those seen by the Wauwalak, or collected by them for food. These, it will be remembered, became *mareiin*, sacred, when they left the Wauwalak and joined their ceremonial leader, Julunggul, in Muruwul well.

A little later the men, who have spent part of the evening on the sacred ground, leave this place, and dance with lighted paperbark torches towards the main camp. On their way they meet the women, crouched under conically shaped mats, termed *ngalmara*.⁵ Two old women walk up and down, calling out the names of foods which at 796

5. The *ngalmara*, made of plaited pandanus, is now rarely seen in native camps of this region, having been superseded by blankets. It was once (as mentioned in Chapter I c) an important part of a woman's equipment, used for providing shade, for a protection against mosquitoes and sandflies, and for a temporary shelter for a menstruating girl. Symbolically, it represented the uterus, and this aspect is treated in detail in the Djungga-wul cycle. (Vile R. Berndt, *Djungga-wul*, for publication). [285] [841]

Significance of the Djanggawul

778 article of everyday use. Moreover, since it is symbolically associated with females, their use of it is not incongruous. The mat, conically shaped, is plaited from split and dried pandanus fibre, and usually has a fringe symbolizing the Sisters' pubic hair. Adult women and children still shelter under such mats from time to time. A child, for instance, may curl up asleep beneath one, completely hidden from view; and then he, or she, may be likened to the sacred *rangga* emblems which in the mythological period were kept within the mat.

[295] The Djanggawul brought with them, too, a dilly bag woven from pandanus fibre interlaced with red breast-feathers of the parakeet, with feathered pendants attached. This is the sacred dilly bag or spirit bag called *jelagandja*, or *mumdaidjingu*. It is sacred because it is worn by men during certain ceremonies, particularly the *dua nara*, and contains part of their spirit self; for this bag is also a symbol of the uterus, from which (or, alternatively, from the *ngainmara*) men and women came forth in the beginning. Waxed knobs fastened at intervals along the feathered string may contain foreskins, said to be an allusion to fertility. These bags, although highly sacred, are not kept on the ritual ground, nor are they regarded as secret. Worn by men in the camp, they are seen by all, and women too may use them at times. In fact, their making is often entrusted to women, who in the Milingimbi area also prepare the beautiful feathered string (although in the north-eastern area this particular variety is made by men). It is only when the bag is almost finished that it is passed over to the men, who ritually, to the accompaniment of sacred invocation and singing, cut the loose fringe (the pubic hair or, alternatively, the clitorises of the Two Sisters)¹ and attach the red feathered pendants (the rays of the sun from the Djanggawul). The bag is then returned to the women, who complete the edging and attach the handle of jungle twine. The men who have cut the fringe, because they belong to *dua* moiety groups responsible for the *nara* Djanggawul rituals, are termed 'the Children of the Djanggawul'—like the children who came in the beginning from the sacred uteri of the Sisters (*vide* the myth and the songs).

[462] The Djanggawul also carried with them sacred poles, known as *rangga*. These poles are very sacred; they are used only on the ritual ground, and are seen only by fully initiated men or by neophytes. Women, however, know of their existence and can describe their shape and decoration, and discuss their meaning.

¹ The basic symbolism of this, as an umbilical cord, will be discussed later in this volume.

Not every man is skilled in weaving *bäti* (baskets), of which many types are recognised, each with its own name and each made for a specific purpose. A man with special skill in weaving becomes known, but he is called merely *kon mainmäk*, a "good hand". Such a man may acquire some local renown and receive substantial payments (*baka bākmarämma*) in return for his work, but again, this is a tribute to, and an acknowledgement of, the *marr* of the master craftsman, the prestige he brings, rather than "payment" for his activities, his craftsmanship. But it shows the beginnings of the recognition of craft specialisation, the *virtu* of special skill in craftsmanship.

But in the case of the *lippa lippa*, the wooden dugout canoes, which may exceed 24 feet in length and may be capable of carrying upwards of six to eight men on sailing

to use these stingray spines is the prerogative of these clans only and is jealously guarded.

Again, the fine appearance and balance of a spear is not always a gauge of its worth. I once remarked to an informant, Raiwälla, of a spear shaft, that it was crooked and twisted, and the spear not of much value. But he corrected me quickly and pointed out that as the shaft was crooked the spear was not "flash" and was therefore more likely to fly straight to its mark. Such a remark is enlightening, because it stresses at once the great difference in the way in which the white man and the Arnhemlander look at even so simple an artefact as a spear. To the white man, a wooden shaft is of good or indifferent craftsmanship, but the native attributes personality to it. Its very appearance may be deceptive. It may possess *marr* from its background and association. For this reason a native may place great value upon spears received within the ceremonial exchange cycle, from areas renowned for weapons of a certain type, although to the eye of the white man they may appear to be inferior to those which he makes for himself. The native recognises the prestige (the *marr*) of the master craftsman. By their associations certain *gerri* possess *marr*, and they have therefore a vastly enhanced psychological value as fighting or hunting weapons.

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nonchalantly remarked that when bush-rats spoiled most of the stores, they bartered fish, wallaby, and lily-seeds from nomads. 797

We saw white-washed aboriginal cottages built from locally burnt shell-lime, stones and ant-bed that had been standing for twenty years. Weird outlines of hands were in a number of bark huts, and an old nomad explained that when they 'go bush' they leave the mark of a hand in the house of a friend. Imprints are made by chewing moistened clay and spraying it from the mouth over a hand outstretched on the bark. When the hand is removed its outline remains in the centre of the white clay. [201]

Indifferent land had been cultivated, and in good seasons yielded tapioca, sweet-potatoes, coconuts, and bananas. Nomads work in the gardens during the wet season and also collect bêche-de-mer from the mud-flats for export. Women weave baskets, fans, and trays from wild pandanus palm, and these are marketed for them by the mission. [241] [226] [439] [285]

At Goulburn Island I met some of the young Fijians who work on all these stations. Kolinio was a giant, a carpenter by trade and the son of a chief. He introduced me to the satisfying juice of the green coconut by gashing a lip in the soft shell of a green nut and handing it to me brimming with cold, exquisitely flavoured liquid. It has been inadequately likened to cold lemonade. Fijians get on well with aborigines and perhaps their colour is a link rather than a bar. They are born agriculturists, but need to unlearn a lot when they come from their fertile islands to desolate monsoonal Arnhem Land. [177]

Milingimbi was at that time the end of the lugger trip. It is one of the many low scrub-covered islands and mud-flats known as the Crocodile Islands, yet within thirty miles of Milingimbi there is the densest Yulengor population in Arnhem Land. In 1918 this mission was begun as an extension of that at Goulburn Island. The advance seems [161]

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763 hundred miles away, and it was thought that two Yirrkala men had been killed. The men who were with me immediately supported the tidings with the evidence of the fires in the bush, that had obviously been lit by the mali of the dead men, who had travelled the hundred miles to inform their friends.

775 Unexpected and distant smoke is at times considered to come from mali camp-fires. Without consciously contradicting the statement that mali are spirits, Yulengor complacently attribute unrecognizable footprints and other physical functions to them. An unknown canoe carried in on the tide or found on an island is accepted as having been used by mali when hunting or fishing.

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881 Women have been assigned a very inferior place in aboriginal society, and it almost seems that they attend some ceremonies to focus attention on the men. But at least one ceremony is carried out entirely by women, at the coming of a first menstrual period.

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302 A young wife, on recognizing the menarche, informs her mother, who then forbids her to leave her windbreak. Food and water are brought to her, and most likely she will curl up in her 'nganmurra', or cone-shaped mat, till she recovers. She is painted with two bands of clay below the shoulders, and red, yellow, and white vertical lines are made between these bands. Whenever menstruation recurs, women smear themselves with ochre and painstakingly abstain from eating men's food. Dugong, turtle, fish, and birds are regarded as men's food, and men are expected to spear them; women content themselves with collecting yams, roots, and shellfish. With undisguised chagrin, a wife in this temporary quarantine will sit with her husband and his wives round the camp-fire, painted red and with her back turned, and will nibble a yam or shellfish whilst the family consume turtle, kangaroo, or fish.

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[462]

YULENGOR

283 made on the same principle. Three men each take a length of fibre. They twist them and pass them one to another to form a single length of rope. As the rope lengthens it is passed over the limb of a tree and held taut by a fourth man.

286 Woven pandanus dilly-bags are pleasing and effective
415 examples of artistic workmanship. Sacred bags are small,
[237] but beautifully woven, and are adorned with parrot feathers
[531] or fur and sometimes totemically painted. Women make most of them and some are so closely woven that they hold water. The majority, however, are large work bags which hang down their backs and are used to carry yams, shells, roots, and small animals. Another bag is made from string, is similar to the well-known onion bag, and will hold thirty or forty pounds of yams.

292 The curious 'nganmara' is peculiar to Arnhem Land. It is a
● 285 house, an umbrella, a garment, a shelter from the wind and
293 rain, a mat on which to sleep, and it is conveniently carried
[513] under the arm. This conical straw umbrella mat is woven from pandanus palm; it is circular, with an apex two feet high, and gives some slight protection from sun, wind, or rain. When the nganmara is thrown open on the ground a woman and child can be completely hidden under it. I first saw an nganmara when I was on the King River, where the woman who had it was hunting with her friends. When I asked her to show me the mat under her arm, she calmly handed me the nganmara, which was her only clothing. Knowing that strangers were in the camp, some of the women had politely donned leafy twigs, but this lady relied on her nganmara and deftly swung it from under her arm.

296 In west Arnhem Land, tobacco pipes are made from
[237] large crab claws. More elaborate pipes are also made by boring the pithy centre from a soft jungle shrub and plugging